

## Guesthouse sued over double bed policy

- Mr Peter Bull (aged 70) and his wife, Hazelmary (aged 66), own Chymorvah guesthouse in Marazion, near Penzance in Cornwall. The guesthouse is also their home.
- The Bulls bought the guesthouse in 1986. In keeping with their Christian faith, they restrict the use of double bed accommodation to married couples. Their policy was supported by the English Tourist Board until 2007.
- The policy is well advertised on the internet and all booking forms; it is applied consistently to unmarried couples, whether heterosexual or homosexual.
- The bedrooms feature open Bibles and Christian leaflets. The reception features a mosaic that reads: "Jesus Christ is Lord".
- In 2007 the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations were passed. The regulations outlaw discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation when providing goods and services.
- The regulations contain exemptions to protect the liberty of religious organisations and to protect the liberty of those who provide certain goods and services in their own home.
- Since 2007 the regulations have caused all but one Roman Catholic adoption agency to close or cut ties with the Church. When placing children with couples, the agencies had a policy of insisting that the couples were married.
- In mid August 2008 an anonymous person sent a booklet entitled "the pink pound" to Mr and Mrs Bull's guesthouse.
- A letter dated 22 August 2008 was sent by Stonewall, a homosexual lobby group, to the guesthouse claiming that its double bed policy was illegal.
- On 4 September 2008 Mr Steven Preddy booked a double room. The following day he arrived at the guesthouse with a man, Mr Martyn Hall, who he described as his civil partner.
- Mr Preddy and Mr Hall were informed that double bed accommodation was restricted to married couples. Their deposit was refunded.
- On 19 September 2008, the guesthouse received correspondence from Devon and Cornwall Police stating that an allegation had been made that the guesthouse policy was homophobic and went against current civil legislation. The police stated that the matter had been recorded as a "non crime homophobic incident".
- In March 2009, Mr Preddy and Mr Hall issued a civil claim against Mr and Mrs Bull under the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 for allegedly being discriminated against on the ground of sexual orientation.
- Mr Preddy and Mr Hall are seeking financial compensation for injury to feelings up to the value of £5,000. Their litigation is being financed by the Government funded Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Mr and Mrs Bull contest the claim of discrimination. They say their double bed policy applies to all unmarried couples regardless of sexual orientation. They say it is based on their beliefs about marriage, not hostility to any sexual orientation.
- Their legal defence is being financed by The Christian Institute, a charity that protects the religious liberty of Christians.
- The case against Mr and Mrs Bull is due to be tried at Bristol County Court on 13 and 14 December 2010.