

# FAQs ABOUT VISITING YOUR TD

## How do I make an appointment to visit my local TD?

There are a number of ways of contacting your local TD: First, go to the clickable map of Ireland on [www.marriagequality.ie](http://www.marriagequality.ie) to identify who are the TDs in your area. This also provides contact details for all TDs in the country.

Second, if they have a constituency clinic, then drop in to see them. Otherwise telephone, email, or write to each of the TDs in your area saying you would like to talk to them about opening up marriage to lesbian and gay couples. They will either make an individual appointment for you or suggest you attend one of their constituency clinics.

## What is a constituency clinic?

A constituency clinic is an opportunity for members of the public to meet their TDs on a one-to-one basis and talk about any issue where the TD may be able to help. They are often held in TDs constituency offices or other public venues.

MarriageEquality representatives have been repeatedly told by politicians that they are the most effective means of reaching and speaking with our TDs.

## What happens if my TD does not respond to my initial request for a meeting?

Keep trying. Some TDs will respond straight away to your request. Others will require a bit more effort.

If your TD operates public constituency clinics then the best thing to do is simply present yourself there. It isn't as easy for them to ignore you when you are sitting in front of them!

## What should I do if I only get to speak to a representative and not the TD themselves?

TDs are busy people. However, most should accommodate your request for a face-to-face meeting. Others may use a representative such as a local Councillor to meet and talk to you. In the first instance you should talk to whoever is there but also think of it as a practice run and go in again another day when the TD her/himself is there.

## What if they say the issue is being addressed by the upcoming Civil Partnership legislation?

You could explain to them that civil partnership is not the same as civil marriage.

Civil partnership may deliver on some of the pressing issues for same-sex couples but it will not give same-sex relationships the same status as marriage, nor will it give same-sex relationships all the same legal rights and responsibilities or constitutional protection as marriage does. You could give them a copy of MarriageEquality's document outlining some of the limitations of the proposed civil partnership legislation.

## What if they say that same-sex marriage would require constitutional change and a referendum?

Tell them that the Supreme Court has yet to decide that issue in the Zappone & Gilligan case. MarriageEquality shares the opinion of some of Ireland's finest constitutional lawyers who see no constitutional impediment to providing marriage equality. There is no substance to the argument that full equality for same-sex couples is unconstitutional.

## What if they say that by introducing civil marriage for lesbian and gay people Ireland would be going beyond what has been done in other countries?

You should point to the fact that same-sex marriage already exists in other EU countries: the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and Spain. Emphasise the Spanish example whereby the Government decided to introduce marriage equality because they realised that half measures such as civil partnership would mean simply returning again and again to the issue. Instead they dealt with it in one go by providing equality from the start.

In addition Canada, South Africa, Nepal and Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa and Vermont in the United States have introduced marriage equality.

As a modern country, Ireland should be at the forefront of social change, not the last country to implement it.

## What happens after your visit?

If you don't hear from them, follow up your visit with a letter or e-mail by way of gentle reminder. Make sure they do whatever they agreed to do for you.

Feedback is vital. Let us know how you got on. Call us or e-mail us. It's very important so we can keep track of who has been visited, what their attitudes are and whether our visits are having an impact on their attitudes.

We need at least six visits to every TD and so every visit counts. Your visit is very important to the nationwide campaign.

**Encourage friends and family members to get involved with the campaign and to visit their TDs and other local representatives.**

**Ask them to get in touch via the website [www.marriagequality.ie](http://www.marriagequality.ie) or e-mail us [info@marriagequality.ie](mailto:info@marriagequality.ie) or telephone us (01) 6599459**