



**News Release**

**17 June 2013**

## **Gay couples shine a torch for the benefits of marriage, says QualitySolicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway family solicitor**

As gay couples celebrate their new right to marry, a Warrington solicitor believes the campaign has shone a useful spotlight on the benefits of all couples, homosexual and heterosexual, formally tying the knot.

Audrey Venables, head of family law at QualitySolicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway, says too many unmarried couples put their trust in the erroneous belief they gain legal status as a common-law couple after a certain length of time.

She says: "You would be surprised how many intelligent, well-educated people live under the misconception they have rights to their partner's property, savings and pensions, if they split up.

"If you live in a house which is registered only in your partner's name or have built up a joint business which does not specify you as an owner, you could walk away from a relationship with nothing unless you are married."

A case earlier this year highlighted the issue when a county court ruled Pamela Curran, who had lived with her partner Brian Collins for 30 years, was entitled to nothing when the relationship ended. She had lived in a house which was in his name only and despite jointly running a kennel and cattery business, she was denied any share in the property or business when they split.

"Although many couples live together and even have children without a formal marriage certificate, the law has not caught up with this expanding social trend, leaving many people, particularly women, unprotected and vulnerable," she says.

“If couples are determined not to enter into a formal marriage, there can be ways of protecting their assets through the law of trusts, but as the law stands, a marriage certificate is the only guarantee of equitable treatment.”

And she adds: “And even for those who have been married, it’s important to finalise the finances with a formal court order. Wind farm millionaire Dale Vince recently had to fight off a challenge for a share in his new green energy fortune from his ex-wife, who walked out on him 20 years ago. The court ruled he owed her nothing but it’s always important to dot the ‘i’s and ‘t’s and draw a formal line under a relationship.”

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact 01925 230000 or consult the website [www.qualitysolicitors.com/fdr](http://www.qualitysolicitors.com/fdr). Follow us on Twitter: @QSFDR

## **EDITOR’S NOTES:**

### **About Forshaws Davies Ridgway**

- Forshaws Davies Ridgway is a full service legal practice with offices in Warrington, Stockton Heath and Frodsham, divided into QualitySolicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway, providing individual legal services and **fdr**, a specialist commercial practice, at 21 Bold Street, Warrington.
- 18 Partners
- Over 100 staff
- Services include: Commercial Law, Conveyancing, Criminal, Family, Litigation, Wills & Probate.

### **About QualitySolicitors:**

- Launched in 2010, QualitySolicitors is a group of law firms across the country working as part of the QualitySolicitors brand. Only one firm per local area is selected to become a QS partner. Customer feedback forms an integral part of the selection process.
- QualitySolicitors’ national network of lawyers consists of over 400 branches across England and Wales, including 150 Legal Access Points in WHSmith stores.
- QualitySolicitors lawyers are experts in their fields dealing with both consumer and SME legal matters. QualitySolicitors offer a personal, local service but with the assurance of a recognised national brand.
- In 2011 QS secured equity investment from Palamon Capital Partners, a private equity house with a £700m fund.
- QualitySolicitors has recently announced an exclusive partnership with US firm LegalZoom. QS firms will operate as panel members for all consumer and business LegalZoom work following their launch in the UK.
- QualitySolicitors launched a multi-million pound, national campaign in 2012, designed to shake up the legal world and help make solicitors’ services more accessible to everyone. The campaign is the largest in the history of the legal profession. Running across multiple outlets it includes peak terrestrial television adverts, posters and billboards, press advertising, a social media campaign, and live stunts around the country to showcase the local expertise of each QualitySolicitors firm. In addition, QualitySolicitors is encouraging all

local solicitors, whether they are part of the group or not, to rally together against 'supermarket law' with a call to arms of, 'Be vocal. Keep solicitors local'.

***Issued by***

***Lynn Pegler, Pegler Communications***

***Tel: 01928 789042. Mob: 07783 686246. [lynn@peglercommunications.co.uk](mailto:lynn@peglercommunications.co.uk)***

*On behalf of Quality Solicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway*